

# INDIA AND CHINA

*By*

SIR MUHAMMAD ZAFARULLA KHAN

**Indian Institute of Public Administration**  
**Indraprastha Estate, New Delhi.**

KITABISTAN  
ALLAHABAD

70  
Hind. Ext. (H)

THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS is an unofficial and non-political body, founded in 1936 to encourage and facilitate the scientific study of international questions and problems. The Institute, as such, is precluded by its rules from expressing an opinion on any aspect of British Commonwealth relations or of domestic, international or imperial affairs. The views expressed in this paper, are, therefore, purely individual.

|                                 |             |
|---------------------------------|-------------|
| DEPT. OF COMMONWEALTH RELATIONS |             |
| Lib. Acc.                       | 19          |
| File No.                        |             |
| Date                            | 2. 2. 1945. |
| Diary No.                       |             |

DX54  
K527  
C.2

First Published—December 1944

The massive barrier of the Himalayas has effectively prevented any considerable volume of direct intercourse between China and India overland through the centuries. There has existed a summer caravan route between Sinkiang and the north-west of India and a certain amount of trade has always trickled over the Pamir Passes by this route, but the route is open only during about four months in the year and even when Sinkiang has been reached, China proper is still a long way off.

Mule transport is also possible between China and India by way of Tibet, but here too Lhasa is more easily reached from India than from China. On the occasion of the installation of the present Dalai Lama in 1942 an adviser to the Governor of one of the Chinese provinces bordering upon Tibet who had been deputed to attend in his official capacity found it much more convenient and expeditious to return to his province from Lhasa by way of Darjeeling, Calcutta, Kunming, Chungking, Chengtu and Lanchow, than by the direct route from Lhasa over the mountains. The air service between Calcutta and Chungking operated by the Chinese National Airways Corporation, of course, enabled him to perform the journey over that section in the course of a day and thus rendered it very much shorter in point of time than it would otherwise have been.

Till the opening of the Burma Road such intercourse, commercial and otherwise, as existed between India and China was carried on mainly by sea. It was only when China was completely blockaded by the

Japanese by sea and the nationalist forces were pushed back into the western and south-western provinces that the need of opening a direct land route between China and India, which could be availed of all the year round, became imperative. This route became the Burma Road. When the occupation of Upper Burma in the spring of 1942 by Japanese forces sealed the Burma end of the road, China's sole means of contact with the outside world was the air service between Calcutta and Chungking by way of Kunming. This service used to run direct from Calcutta to Lashio and then on the Kunming in almost a straight line. With the occupation of Upper Burma by the Japanese the air route had also to be modified and the service had to run much further north over mountain ranges rising as high as 16,000 to 18,000 feet. With the closure of the Burma Road military supplies of all descriptions for China had to be flown over this route and this was undertaken by the American Transport Service. Since the summer of 1942 these services have kept the back door into China from India open and the volume of supplies now being ferried across this route into China is larger than was at any time conveyed by motor transport along the Burma Road. The total quantity taken by itself is not very impressive, but to those who know and can appreciate the dangers and difficulties of this particular air run, the performance has seemed truly amazing.

With the re-occupation of Burma by the Allied Forces, it would again become possible for the air service to run direct from Calcutta to Lashio and Kunming and thus to avoid the high ranges in the north which it is at present forced to negotiate. This



would not only make the run safer but should cut down the time taken by the flight between Calcutta and Kunming by at least two hours.

It is often stated that the Indian and Chinese cultures are very much akin to each other. As I have tried to show there has been very little direct contact between these two great countries except at the ports. Whatever contribution Buddhism may be held to have made towards the development of Chinese culture, may in some measure be ascribed to India, inasmuch as Buddhism originated in India and travelled to China from this country, but no traces of Chinese culture are discoverable in Indian culture. Dr. George K. C. Yeh, Counsellor of the Chinese Embassy in London, speaking before the East India Association on the 23rd July, 1942 said—

“For two or three centuries there had been trade caravans between China and India, and gradually China's knowledge of India became more defined, especially regarding her strong, colourful religious life. It is regrettable that we know so little of the trade caravans which in those early days passed between India and China, but we are certain that there were caravans, for they were referred to in many of our earlier writings.”

And again :—

“It is interesting to note that a Chinese Buddhist, however devoted a disciple of the Budha he may be, reacts to the material world and to political problems in ways quite different from his Indian prototype. It is commonly said in China that when a man is in grievous pain or when he has sustained an irreparable loss, such as the death of one dear to him, he seeks spiritual relief and comfort in Buddhism. This is not only true of civil servants and high officials, but also true of the common people, the bulk of whom remain Confucianist-Buddhist without feeling any serious conflict in the combination. From the religious point of view it may be said that the Chinese as a people are probably incapable of complete religion in the sense that they are rarely able to lead a life entirely given up to religion such as exemplified by Hindus and Buddhists in India.

"This inability to absorb themselves in religion is very probably due to the staying influence of Confucianism, which in spirit pulls a man in the opposite direction from that laid down by Buddhism. Confucianism has made the Chinese so practical-minded and has instilled in them such a strong belief in the golden mean that it is difficult to find any Chinese who would not give up all religious taboos and habits for more urgent and matter-of-fact considerations." (ASIATIC REVIEW, October 1942 pp. 1 and 3).

That there are many points of similarity between certain features of the cultures and some of the social customs of the main populations of the two countries is undeniable, but there is no evidence either of a common origin or of direct influence. The average Chinese, except during periods of political excitement, is apt to view all foreign matters of belief and ritual with amused toleration, and apart from conformity to certain customs which are looked upon more as matters of "face" and social status rather than matters of religion, is not himself very particular with regard to doctrine or practice in the strictly religious sense. For instance, there is nothing corresponding to the Indian caste system in the religious or social structure of China, whereas in the eyes of the large bulk of the Indian population no other matter is of such paramount importance in the social and religious spheres as the safeguarding of the integrity of caste and the observance of caste ceremonies and ritual. Nevertheless it would be true to state that when a Chinaman meets an Indian, he experiences a warmer feeling of kinship than he does when he meets a European or an American. That this results partly from their common misfortunes, economic and political, may be conceded, but I am sure it goes deeper than that.

The number of Muslims in China has been variously estimated. The correct figure would appear

to lie somewhere between thirty and fifty millions. Chinese Muslims may be classified into two broad racial groups—those of Turkish or Tartar origin and those of Chinese origin. The former may for all practical purposes be regarded as an extension of the Central Asian Tartar belt. The bulk of them are to be found in Sinkiang and the adjoining north-western provinces of China proper. The latter may, in matters of general culture, be regarded as a part of the main Chinese population. In dress and general appearance they are scarcely to be distinguished from the people among whom they move about. It would be difficult for a casual visitor to China to pick out a Chinese Muslim in the streets in any of the larger towns merely from his dress or features, though, no doubt, after a prolonged residence in the country it might be possible to do so. For ordinary purposes Chinese Muslims use Chinese names, the pre-fixing of “Ma” to a name being an indication that the bearer of it is a Muslim. Inside the family and among fellow Muslims they also use Arabic names as personal names.

Many of the “Ahungs” (corruption of Akhwands?) and “Khojas” are well versed in Arabic; some of them having completed their education at the Al Azhar University in Cairo. The bulk of the Chinese Muslims, however, know no Arabic and even the prescribed parts of the *Salat* (congregational prayer) are repeated by them in the Chinese language. They are extremely strict in the observance of the Islamic injunctions with regard to food and drink. Not only do they take scrupulous care to avoid the use of prohibited articles of food and drink and insist upon animals, the meat of which is intended to be used as food for the Muslims,

being slaughtered in accordance with prescribed directions, but they go further and avoid the use of all food not cooked by a Muslim.

The Chinese are proverbially prolific and yet the proportion of Muslims in the population is slowly on the increase. This is not ascribed to natural causes or to conversion, the average Chinese, as already stated, being somewhat indifferent in matters of religion. I was told that whenever the scourge of famine sweeps through any part of the country, large numbers of children are left destitute and unprovided for. Muslim families take in as many of these destitute orphans as they can afford to. These children became for all purposes members of their adoptive families and grow up as Muslims.

During the latter years of the Manchu regime a series of rebellions broke out in Sinkiang and the north-western provinces. These were led by Muslim Generals the bulk of whose followers were also Muslims. They were put down ruthlessly and were followed by severe persecution of Muslims in the affected areas which resulted in a considerable reduction in the numbers of the Muslim population of those areas. An attempt was also made to set up a Muslim kingdom in the south-western Province of Yunnan (of which Kunming is the capital) which came very near to being successful but was eventually frustrated and ended in disaster.

After the revolution of 1911 the Muslims appear to have cast their lot on the Nationalist side and have throughout co-operated with the Central Government set up under the leadership of Chiang Kai-shek. In recent years there has been noticeable a progressive awakening of political and social consciousness among

the Muslims in all the provinces which may raise a Muslim Question in China in the post-war years. But for the moment the Muslims are working in co-operation with the Kuomintang. Their main anxiety is to procure better and more extensive facilities for education, particularly University education, and a larger share of administrative posts than is available to them at present.

General Pai Chung Hsi, the famous Kwangsi General, Deputy Chief of Staff under the Generalissimo and reputed to be the cleverest strategist in China is a Muslim and stands very high in the Councils of his Chief. He is by many regarded as Chiang Kai-shek's military successor. He is also looked upon as the political leader of the Muslims in Free China. He is a zealous Muslim and is keenly interested in the advancement of his co-religionists, but his outlook has been considerably affected by recent happenings in Turkey. He thinks that religion ought to be a matter of private and domestic concern for each individual and should not be permitted to intrude into the economic and political spheres. Some of the younger Muslim intellectuals are not quite satisfied with General Pai's attitude. They feel that the only way for Muslims to achieve solidarity and to march forward along the paths of progress is through strict conformity to the teachings of Islam in all spheres of life.

On behalf of the Kuomintang the position occupied by General Pai and the fact that two of the Provincial Governors are Muslims and that a few other Muslims hold posts in the administration are often cited as evidence in support of the assertion that the Muslims receive favourable treatment from the Kuomintang.

The necessity for such propaganda has been created by the effort which is being made by the Japanese in occupied China to detach the sympathies of the Muslims from the Nationalist cause by according distinctive favourable treatment to them. This has apparently so far failed to achieve its purpose. The Muslims in unoccupied China have not been affected by it as they know what value to place upon these and similar Japanese gestures. On the other hand the fact that General Pai Chung Hsi is Deputy Chief of the Staff and that there are a couple of Muslim Provincial Governors, is no evidence of any particular regard being entertained by the Kuomintang or the Central Government for the Muslims. The adherence of General Pai to the Nationalist cause is a source of support and strength to the Kuomintang and the Generalissimo. Provincial Governors are, as a rule, war lords who wield enough local influence to seize political power into their hands and do not normally owe their position to the party or the Central Government. The fact that the two Provinces having Muslim Governors have made common cause with the Nationalists puts the latter under obligation to these Governors rather than the other way about.

The Communists, though very much smaller in numbers than the Muslims, are a much more serious factor in the political situation in China. They are very highly organised and do not owe any allegiance to the Central Government which in fact extends recognition to no other political party than the Kuomintang. During the struggle against Japan an uneasy truce has existed between the Communists and the Central Government but each side continues to manoeuvre for position



in preparation for the conflict for supremacy which everybody assumes is bound to commence as soon as Japanese forces have been expelled. Attempts are made from time to time to arrive at a settlement, but as neither side is prepared to make any real concessions or to surrender any portion of its claims, the prospects of a peaceful settlement are not very bright.

Theodore H. White, the correspondent of "Time" and "Life" in the Far East who has travelled extensively in Free China sums up the situation thus :—(The extracts are taken from the Reader's Digest for August 1944. p. 25).

"Given the present political texture and leadership of the Nationalist Party, a Civil war between Communists and Nationalists seems almost inevitable. If Japan were defeated tomorrow, it is quite possible that the troops of Chiang Kai-shek would crush the Communist armies in six months. But the war is a long one, and the Communists have been gaining in influence and power, so that the ultimate test of strength is difficult to determine. The shrewdest observers believe that there will be no outbreak until the Japanese are defeated.

"The Nationalists desire above all else to present to the world the aspect of United China. This makes their voice strong in international councils. Therefore their censorship policy has been to suppress any reference to the activities of the Communist armies in the North or any impression of serious internal opposition to their rule.

"As a matter of fact, however, the Chinese Communists rule independently over vast and populous territories in north China. Although the great burden of the war has been borne by the armies of the Central Government, Communist armies are fighting the Japanese all through the vital provinces of Shantung, Hopeh, Shansi and North Kiangsu. Completely cut off from the Central Government, they have woven a net of popular resistance about Japanese garrisons and railways. Their arms are seized from the Japanese or home-manufactured. They number between 200,000 and 300,000 men and hold down perhaps 200,000 Japanese troops,

"In their rear the Communists are sealed off from all outside aid by perhaps ten divisions of the best troops of the Central Government armies, which might otherwise be

fertile regions. The vastness of the country and the undeveloped state of its communications made it unprofitable for Japan to attempt occupation of the whole of it. The game was not worth the candle. It was from the Japanese point of view, no doubt, a serious annoyance that Chiang Kai-shek stubbornly refused to submit to Japanese dictation. But had not Japan committed the supreme folly of Pearl Harbour, the complete subjugation of China and the breaking of its will to resist Japanese domination had been only a question of time. Japan had China at its mercy and held all the cards.

The news of Pearl Harbour must have sounded like sweet music in the ears of Chiang Kai-shek. To him it meant that the main responsibility for defeating Japan had thereby been transferred from his shoulders to those of the U. S. A., Great Britain and the other United Nations. The Generalissimo must have entertained the hope that Chinese forces would now be put in a position to sweep the Japanese out of China and to lead the vanguard of the attack against the Japanese mainland itself. The first upsurge of hope in his heart must have been followed by a long spell of disappointment and frustration as disaster after disaster overtook the United Nations in south-east Asia and the Japanese stranglehold on China became progressively tighter.

The occupation of Burma was a particularly bitter blow as by sealing the Burma Road and putting the air service from Calcutta to Kunming out of commission (though only temporarily), it had the effect of severing the very life line of China and cutting it off from all direct contact with the Allies. The almost



immediate resumption of the air service over the Yunnan mountains no doubt afforded some relief, but some months elapsed before any considerable quantity of supplies began to be carried over this route into China.

All this rendered the Generalissimo's position extremely difficult *vis-a-vis* certain elements in his own party that were already weary of what appeared to them to be a hopeless and ruinous struggle. The commercial classes in Free China have for obvious reasons been throughout inclined towards a policy of appeasement. Whatever the difficulties, domestic and foreign, with which the Generalissimo had to contend and whatever his fears and apprehensions, he continued to face both his own party and the outside world with unwavering courage, and his belief in the ultimate success of the cause that he had espoused appeared never to falter. That China has through untold misery and suffering persisted in the course of resistance to Japanese aggression during seven years and a half is due entirely to the courage and determination of one man, Chiang Kai-shek.

But China is at the end of its resources. If it is able to carry on at all, it is only because misery and suffering have unplumbed and unsuspected depths. It is one of the many paradoxes of this astounding war that while outside China Japan's hold over the vast areas that it has tyrannically usurped during the last three years is beginning to be loosened at the fringes, it appears to become firmer in China and even to extend itself. China's only hope now lies in speedy relief from one of two directions—a breach in the

blockade by American naval forces or a restoration of communications with the outside world through Burma by the re-occupation of that country by the forces of the United Nations. If neither of these objectives is achieved at an early date, the uneasy breathing that Free China is now sustaining may prove to be its last gasp. It is true that even if that much to be deplored calamity should overtake China, Japan could not continue for long to evade its own inevitable doom, but the struggle would be needlessly prolonged and from the point of view of China, and indeed of humanity, the collapse of China at the last moment would be a pitiable tragedy which may even now be averted by vigorous action.

The war in Europe is now in the middle of its last phase. The armed forces of the Allies are steadily converging upon the Reich from all directions and the final issue of the struggle is no longer in doubt. Germany will doubtless fight stubbornly and desperately in defence of its frontiers and those in power in that country will in any event, try to delay the day of reckoning for as long as may be possible. The end must however come sometime in 1945 and the united strength of the Allies will then be directed against Japan. The Japanese naval forces have already been badly mauled and Japan no longer possesses a balanced navy adequate to the responsibilities that it has so rashly assumed on so extravagant a scale. Nor is its Air Force any longer equal to the task imposed upon it. To secure the surrender of Japan it will fortunately not be necessary to evict it from every square mile of territory occupied by it on the mainland of south-east Asia and upon the numerous islands, large and small, scat-

tered in the vast seas that roll between India, Australasia and Japan. Once the bulk of Japan's navy has been sunk or swept from the open seas and its remnants have been forced to seek shelter under the muzzles of shore batteries, the far flung areas which it has succeeded in occupying during the last three years and which are even now loosely strung together, are bound to fall apart in a matter of months if not of weeks. The home islands of the Japanese Empire will then be exposed to the full blast and fury of the navies and air forces of the United Nations. Japanese cities are peculiarly vulnerable to bombardment from the sea and air as they are constructed of highly inflammable material and fires once started in the larger cities cannot easily be brought under control and extinguished. The Japanese are a frugal people enured to hardships and have given ample proof of high courage and great endurance. But they are terrified of large fires which if started at numerous points simultaneously and repeated at short intervals, are likely to create panic on a national scale. The final phase of the struggle against Japan therefore is not likely to last very long, and once concentrated attacks from the sea and the air against the main Japanese islands are under way, Japanese resistance may be expected to crumble speedily. Whether the end comes comparatively early or late, the fear of what it is likely to be must already loom large in the minds of those who happen to occupy the seats of power in Japan. Glimpses of the shadow of that fear are even today discernible in the utterances and even the silences of Japanese statement. This may contribute much towards heartening China and, combined even with the merely psychological effect of a breach in blockade or the reopening of the Burma Road, might

suffice to help China through the desperate situation in which it finds itself today.

As I have said above, it would be a thousand pities if China were to collapse at the threshold of victory and one devoutly hopes that that calamity will be averted. With the defeat of Japan China will be freed from all foreign domination, but will not by any means be at the end of its difficulties. A settlement between the Kuomintang and the Communists will be its first imperative necessity. Failing such a settlement a bitter and prolonged civil war appears to be inevitable. If this happens, China may be left out of all calculations for the better part of a generation. It would be idle speculate in advance upon the issue of the conflict and the contingencies to which it might give rise. That it would be a tragedy of the first magnitude goes without saying; and one can here only express the hope that wisdom and true patriotism will make so deep an appeal to those in authority in each camp that will leave no stone unturned to achieve the unity of their great country without having to pass through a sanguinary fratricidal struggle.

One can only attempt to appraise the situation that might present itself if China emerged from the present struggle free, independent and united. Its first task will then be a tremendous effort at reconstruction. The bulk of such industry as was under Chinese control in the summer of 1937 passed into Japanese hands in the early stages of the war. A very small fraction of it was at the cost of great effort transported into Free China, but it has proved entirely inadequate to the calls made upon it. When liberation

comes the Japanese may be forced to leave behind in China not only what had originally belonged to China, but also such plant, machinery, etc., as has been set up by the Japanese themselves in China and Manchuria. If any part of this is not in complete working order its restoration and renovation may not present much difficulty. Even then provision for the needs of 450 millions of human beings would necessitate rapid industrial expansion and an enormous inflow of imports. This would raise large and complicated questions of credits, currency, tariffs, supply of skilled artisans, training of engineers, organisation and welfare of labour and a host of others. In the field of agriculture large scale organisation, restoration and improvement of means of irrigation and methods of cultivation may be necessary. Industrial Co-operatives are doing very useful work in Free China; but the effort and organisation that will be required to set up post-war China on its economic feet, if life is to be made even moderately attractive and is not to continue to be a perpetual burden to the Chinese peasant and labourer, will be many scores of times higher than that which war-weary and war-torn China will be capable of providing. Generous help from every quarter would not only be welcome but necessary during this phase of China's development. India, though in some respects itself situated as China is, may yet be able to give not only sympathy but active help. It is from many points of view imperative for the welfare and prosperity of India that China should not only be free, independent and united, but also reasonably prosperous. India has large schemes of post-war reconstruction and industrialisation. One factor that might make a considerable



contribution towards the success or failure of these schemes will be the conditions prevailing in China now that India is likely to find itself linked with China not only by means of the comparatively long sea route but also by the land route through Burma and air services from Calcutta to Kunming and Chungking and beyond, and from Peshawar or Nowshera to Kashgar and Yarkand.

The Chinese are a very diligent and ingenious people. The average Chinese artisan is extremely clever and can learn and improve very rapidly. If living conditions in China do not improve materially and quickly after its deliverance from Japan all countries bordering upon China towards the south are bound to be subjected to considerable pressure resulting from the competition of cheap, capable and easily trainable Chinese labour. This might necessitate a very rigid code of immigration laws which would from every point of view be not only undesirable but deplorable. It is, therefore, everybody's interest and particularly that of India to see that China with its huge population attains economic equilibrium as quickly as possible after the cessation of hostilities in the East. India has its own complicated and thorny problems to tackle in the immediate post-war period and would have every desire not to be burdened with more of them arising from conditions prevailing in the territories of its great neighbour towards the North.

In the political field China entertains no aggressive designs against any body, but the adjustment of what it considers to be its legitimate claims may occasion some difficulty. The average Chinese is apt

to regard himself as belonging to the only really cultured section of humanity and looks upon everybody else as a barbarian who is to be treated with amused tolerance unless he becomes actively troublesome. The foreigner, though tolerated, has never been really liked in China and perhaps the responsibility for this does not lie entirely upon Chinese shoulders. Foreign nationals have only in very rare instances been inspired by altruistic motives in undertaking a journey to China and setting up residence in that country. Great Britain, Germany, France and Portugal have all sought to exploit China for their own ends and the Open Door policy advocated by the U. S. A. *vis-a-vis* China has not been promoted primarily by the Americans' love of the Chinese. The repressive measures forced upon China as the result of the Boxer Rebellion have left very bitter memories behind and are not likely soon to be forgotten. What have come to be known in China as the Unequal Treaties imposing Extra-territoriality upon and extorting commercial concessions from the Chinese have been bitterly resented. The presence of every foreigner in China is during periods of excitement interpreted by the average Chinese as a symbol of his own humiliation. The situation has been eased somewhat in this respect during the last three years by the necessity to which China has been reduced of seeking the aid of the U. S. A. and Great Britain against Japanese aggression. It has not, however, forgotten that America continued during the first four years of that aggression to sell iron and oil to Japan to enable it to carry on the war and its campaign of atrocities in China, and that Great Britain in an endeavour to

appease Japan agreed to close the Burma Road in the summer of 1940.

The abolition of Extra-territoriality has afforded much gratification to China though it is looked upon as a grudging and belated righting of a wrong rather than a favour or concession. So far as Treaty Ports, International Settlements and Spheres of Influence are concerned, the Japanese occupation of Eastern China has automatically resolved these problems at least in the eyes of the Chinese. Germany will in any case be out of the picture after the war so far as China is concerned, and it is doubtful whether France and Portugal will be able to claim the restoration of territory held or concessions enjoyed by them in China up to 1937. The determination of the British to claim reoccupation of Hong Kong and the island of Kowloon, etc., will raise more serious issues.

The Chinese conceive that they have some kind of a claim with respect to French Indo-China, but I was not able to ascertain the exact nature of this claim and the precise grounds on which it is based. There is a general feeling that they have a better claim to these territories than the French. Possibly China contemplates some sort of autonomy for Indo-China under its own protection and suzerainty.

Tibet is claimed by the Chinese as an autonomous protectorate, but his claim has never been admitted or recognised by India. A shadowy sort of suzerainty is fancied by China over Hunza, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim and also over Burma. It is asserted that before Burma was conquered by the British the Burmese kings acknowledged the suzerainty of the Emperor of China and



sent presents to him by way of tribute. Nepal continued to send these token presents till as late as 1908.

Siam is viewed by China in much the same light as Burma.

In the Malay States the Chinese form a considerable and growing proportion of the population. It is claimed on their behalf that they must have a proportionate share in the administration and Government of the States. This would be a perfectly legitimate aspiration were it not for the fact that Chinese elements in the populations of the countries of south-east Asia continue to profess political allegiance to the powers that may be supreme in China and have not assumed the citizenship of the States in which they have taken up their permanent residence.

How far these claims may be pressed once China finds itself standing firmly on its political and economic feet and what shape they are likely ultimately to assume, are matters of speculation. But it would be wise to remember that these fancies are indulged in by the Chinese and appear to afford some comfort and gratification to them.

China's sympathy with India's political aspirations is deep and genuine, but whether it is altogether disinterested may not be capable of categorical affirmation. It is a legitimate assumption that as it is in the interest of India to see China free, independent, united and prosperous, it is equally in the interest of China to see India free, independent, united and prosperous. China hopes to occupy the position of leadership in Asia and is naturally anxious to secure the support and co-operation of a free and independent India inspired with due respect

for, and prepared to render due deference to, its great neighbour. In fact China would be very happy to play the elder brother to India in the post-war world once India is freed from British domination.

The Central Government maintains a very rigid censorship over the Press and all directive at least with regard to foreign affairs comes from the top. In these matters the Press and the intelligentsia hold no opinion of their own and readily accept and advocate the policies that are from time to time dictated to them and the interpretation which the High Command of the Kuomintang desires placed upon world events. The Generalissimo takes a very keen interest in Indian affairs though his views are often based upon partial and one-sided information and are coloured by what he himself desires to see accomplished. There is a great deal of sympathy between the Kuomintang and the Indian National Congress. Certain aspects of their ideals and organisation bear a strong resemblance to each other. The Generalissimo is somewhat impatient of the communal differences which have proved so formidable an obstacle in the path of political and constitutional advance in India and is apt to treat Muslim fears and apprehensions with regard to the future as exaggerated and the Muslim attitude as one of undue intransigence. This results partly from an apprehension that the acceptance in India of the Muslim claim to recognition as a distinct nation might have corresponding repercussions in post-war China where the Muslim proportion in the population, though not as substantial as in India, is close upon 10% of the total and is more or less concentrated in Sinkiang (where it forms a majority), two or three of the north-western

provinces and Yunnan. Also the Generalissimo views with great disfavour any factor or tendency which may have the effect of postponing the termination of the British connection with India as he is no less fervent an advocate of "Asia for the Asiatics" than Japan, though of course the motive in one case may be open to less serious question than in the other.

The commercial exploitation of China, the Unequal Treaties, the Spheres of Influence, the operation of Extra-territoriality, the measures adopted to deal with Boxer Rebellion and its aftermath, the Indemnity imposed on that occasion and the contrast between the American and British treatment of it, had all resulted in an attitude of antipathy against the British on the part of the Chinese. The humiliating indignities and ill treatment to which British nationals were subjected by the Japanese at Shanghai and other places in Eastern China and the pathetic complacency with which Great Britain put up with these affronts to its national honour and attacks upon the security and property of its nationals, served further to lower British prestige in the eyes of the Chinese. It came to be felt that a Power that was unable or unwilling to secure the safety and dignity of its own nationals was not likely to prove of any great help to China in its struggle against Japan even if it should become an ally. The closing of the Burma Road as a gesture of goodwill or appeasement towards Japan did not serve to improve matters. It was very bitterly resented as a stab in the back at a time when China was hoping for and considered itself deserving of active help. Pearl Harbour might have led to a better understanding as Great Britain was thereby forced to become

an ally of China, but the loss of the "Repulse" and the "Prince of Wales" followed speedily by the submerging of practically the whole of south-east Asia (including Malaya, Singapore, which had fondly been imagined to be impregnable and invulnerable, and Burma) under the advancing tide of Japanese arms, confirmed the impression that the value of Great Britain as an ally need not be unduly over-rated. In the summer of 1942 immediately after the occupation of Burma, British prestige had fallen considerably below zero at Chungking and though diplomatic forms and courtesies continued to be punctiliously observed, there was an easily noticeable undercurrent of contemptuous hostility towards the British.

On the other hand the Americans then enjoyed great popularity in China. Several factors had combined to bring this about. Large numbers of Chinese youngmen and some even of the young women (Madame Chiang Kai-shek is an outstanding instance) had completed the final stages of their higher education and technical training in American colleges, universities and institutes. The American Government had given proof of appreciation of China's difficulties in the matter of the Indemnity imposed after the Boxer Rebellion. After Pearl Harbour America gave China speedier and more substantial help than Great Britain owing to its difficulties and commitments in Europe and North Africa was able to render. The Americans also played China up as a great democratic nation, the wish having in this instance been accepted as a complete substitute for the fact. It is true that the Kuomintang sometime ago framed a constitution for China but it has

not yet been put into operation. The country is not only dismembered but is in too unsettled a condition to permit of constitutional experiments being lightly embarked upon. The fact, however, remains that China is at the moment a democracy only in the sense in which Russia and Germany are claimed to be democracies. Though it must be added that a measure in the nature of a Habeas Corpus Act has recently been put into force, and in the last meeting of the Peoples' Political Council some latitude was permitted in the direction of free expression of views.

During the last two years there has been effected a progressive improvement in the relations between China and Great Britain resulting mainly from the complete reversal of the war situation in Europe and North Africa as compared with the summer of 1942, and the prospects of an early reopening of the Burma Road on the reoccupation of Upper Burma by the Allied forces. In the autumn of 1944, China's relations with the U. S. A. appeared to be subject to a certain amount of strain. General Stilwell, who had for over two years acted as Adviser to the Generalissimo, was recalled almost simultaneously with the failure of the latest attempt on the part of the Central Government to arrive at an understanding with the Communists. The reason for this was alleged to be that General Stilwell was getting tired of a situation in which quite a substantial portion of the best Chinese troops were, instead of fighting the Japanese, employed in maintaining the blockade against the Communist armies in the north, while the Japanese were dispossessing the Chinese of airfield after airfield from which a bombardment of the Japanese mainlands could have been attempted.



Foreign correspondents had sometime previously been permitted to visit the Communist areas in the north and had brought back glowing accounts of their experiences there. The reports of the American Military Mission in Yen-an (the Communist Headquarters) must also have served to readjust American perspective with regard to the relative strength of the Kuomintang and the Communists.

The Kuomintang, and consequently the Central Government, has for a number of years been dominated by the Soong interest. Madame Chiang Kai-shek, a lady of great charm and force of character possessing an extraordinarily intrepid and dynamic personality is the youngest Soong sister. The middle sister is the widow of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, the Father of the Chinese Republic. She is probably the most popular woman in Free China. The eldest sister is the wife of Dr. H.H. Kung, who was for several years Finance Minister in the Central Government and whose financial policies were, not without considerable justification, alleged to be framed and operated more in the interests of Dr. Kung and his satellistes than in the interests of China. The brother T. V. Soong was Foreign Minister and had in that capacity made several trips to the U. S. A.

To quote Theodore H. White again. (The Reader's Digest, for August 1944, p. 24) :—

"To day the Nationalist Party is dominated by a corrupt political clique that combines some of the worst features of Tammany Hall and the Spanish Inquisition. Two brothers, Chen Li-fu and Chen Kuo-fu, practically control the thought of the nation through a combination of patronage, secret police, espionage and administrative authority.

"As chief of the personal bureau of Chiang Kai-shek's headquarters, Chen Kuo-fu controls almost all entrance to the Great Presence. His younger brother, Chen Li-fu, is even

more important. As Minister of Education, he inaugurated a state of intellectual terrorism that exists only in the other great dictatorships.

"The Generalissimo is personally attached to both these men. But within the Nationalist Party itself there is a seething hate of the rule of the Chen clique, its dispensing of patronage, its stupid refusal to treat China's major problems realistically."

About the middle of November 1944 the Generalissimo reconstituted the Central Government. T. V. Soong ceased to be Foreign Minister and became State Councillor. Dr. Kung was forced to give up the Finance Ministership being succeeded by the Assistant Finance Minister, though the latter is only one of Dr. Kung's creatures. Chen Li-fu was moved from the Ministry of Education and became Minister of Organisation. The reasons for and the effect of these changes may be summed up in the language of a Special Correspondent of the "Statesman" (the leading British daily in India) appearing in the issue of that paper dated the 22nd November 1944:—

"Two retreats are taking place in China today. The armies of the Kuomintang Government on the southern front are falling back before the Japanese. Reactionary powers in the Kuomintang Government are losing the long and bitter battle with the progressive forces. It is early yet to hope for a rout, but at any rate, if they are not in headlong flight they are on the trot.

"A year ago foreign newspaper correspondents in China, after months of fighting against the most repressive military and political censorship in the world, were able to send items of news which showed the world outside that China was not the united, progressive nation her propaganda pretended her to be. Since March three of them have left China and blown the lid off the "Cauldron of Cathay."

"The first was Stuart Gelder of the London "News Chronical", the second, Theodore White of "Life" and "Time", the third, Brooks Atkinson of the "New York Times".

The only direct aid being given to that country now is being given by the Americans, who, at consider-

able cost in life and material, are flying more tonnage across the terrible Hump every month than was taken over the Burma Road, are flying the longest missions ever flown, in Super-Fortresses, to attack Japan, Formosa and Manchuria, and are maintaining the only effective air force there, the 14th, which has destroyed hundreds of thousands of tons of Japanese shipping . . . . .

"There is not a single diplomat in China today who does not know, and has not known for a very long time, that what Gelder, White and Atkinson have written is true.

"It is not the first time that newspapermen have led the way in forcing news through barriers of censorship and warning their countrymen of the dangers of not facing the facts. Some of them were doing it for years in Nazi Germany, while some gentlemen of England were entertaining the future butchers of Europe. Others were doing it in Spain while the same gentlemen were feting Franco and his friends.

"This is not new. It is the old sickening story of being wise late. For months the correspondents were fighting to get out the news that 400,000 of the best equipped, trained and fed troops of the Chinese Kuomintang Government were blockading the Communist armies in the north who were the only forces continually attacking the Japanese. For months they fought to obtain permission to go to the Communist capital of Yen-an to write the whole truth, of which even they knew only a part. For months they fought to inform America and England that China was in the grip of reaction from persons like H. H. Kung, Finance Minister, and Gen Ho Ying-Ching, Minister for War, who was not fighting the Japs but put his best troops into the field to impede the Communists who were.

"Not one of these three correspondents has written a line of criticism of the Chinese people. On the contrary they have all seen the danger of a heroic nation of peasants, millions of whom have suffered unspeakably during the war, being identified with a reactionary, corrupt and as Mr. Atkinson has described it, "moribund regime". They have all been at pains to praise the people for their great virtues.

"They have not had to wait very long for their justification. Recently some correspondents, army observers and others visited the Communists in Yen-an. Newspapermen and army men returned to Chungking deeply impressed by the things they had seen, by the spirit and ability of the Communist armies, by the excellence of the Government administration, and by the confidence of the people in the Government.



"On Monday the dismissal of Ho Ying-Ching and Kung was announced. In the same clean-up of the Government, T. V. Soong, Foreign Minister, is made State Councillor. For a year T. V. has hardly been on speaking terms with the Generalissimo. Completely overshadowed by his brother-in-law Kung, he has been a figurehead diplomat. There is not a person informed on Chinese affairs who will not rejoice at this news. It is true that the progressives are not yet a majority in power, but they are coming back.

"There is now a real prospect of agreement with the Communists and an end of the tragic force of the north border blockade. While the backs of the blockading Kuomintang troops were turned on the Japanese war, two important American air bases were lost. The Communists have always expressed their willingness to support Chiang Kai-shek as head of the nation if he will introduce a democratic system. That willingness still remains.

"The changes made this week have not been made without military pressure from the enemy and political pressure from Allied friends. They are a complete justification of those foreign correspondents who have had to tackle one of the most difficult assignments of the war.

"The military situation in China is serious, but it can be repaired. The new Minister for War, Chen Cheng, is an able commander. What is required now is wholehearted co-operation with the Americans, abandonment of the blockade against the Communists and agreement with them, clean-up in the administration and direction of the Kuomintang army and a common strategy between all three."

All this helped to bring about a better appreciation of the Chinese situation in the outside world than had been possible under the very strict censorship imposed by the Central Government. As a consequence the pendulum in the U. S. A. swung completely to the other side, and this doubtless occasioned some irritation and resentment in Chungking. But the realistic attitude of which the Generalissimo has given proof by reconstituting the Government more in accordance with the ideas of the progressive group raises the hope that a settlement with the Communists may not prove to be altogether beyond the bounds of the reasonably possible.

It may be that the younger generation of China who while passing through the fiery ordeal of the last seven years and a half has given proof of so much that is worthy of admiration in the way of courage, endurance, resource and idealism, may come to the fore sooner than might have been expected under normal conditions. China may be so far fortunate as to secure a start on the road of true social, economic and political progress more speedily than present conditions would appear to indicate. Economic reconstruction including industrial expansion, development of communications, improvement of irrigation and the methods of cultivation, modernisation of the system of taxation and the stabilisation of currency and exchange, are only some of the problems that must be tackled immediately on the cessation of hostilities. This must be supplemented by the framing of a democratic constitution suitable to the conditions in China and the genius of its people and putting it into operation as early as possible. As part of the constitutional reconstruction of the country, the codes of legal procedure and the law of evidence must be simplified and brought up to date and a system of independent judicial tribunals must be established manned by properly trained and upright magistrates and judges. The laws relating to banking, companies, insurance, negotiable instruments, carriage of goods by sea and land, etc., must be modernised and brought up-to-date if China hopes to attract foreign capital which will be sorely needed for economic rehabilitation. Above all, the administration must be reformed and purged of all terroristic and Gestapo elements and corruption and graft must be eradicated ruthlessly without distinction of high and low. Equality before

the law must be secured for everybody alike and the whole system must be cleansed in the spirit that has inspired the recent Habeas Corpus law. The Universities which have fostered so heroic a spirit of devotion to learning and have upheld such high ideals of service to the motherland and mutual help and co-operation during the miseries and distresses imposed by the war, must again come into their own and be put in a position to carry on their beneficent activities on an ever expanding scale.

To enable it to rank with the other great nations in the post-war world China must make its due contribution to the international security system. This would necessitate an altogether new attitude towards service in the armed forces of the State. It is well known that till quite recent years a military career and banditry have been almost interchangeable terms in China. The Generalissimo and the Whampoa Academy under his direction have done much to raise the status of military service. Youngmen belonging to respectable and well-to-do families have been exhorted to think of military service as an honourable and patriotic occupation and some success has already been achieved. Once the armed forces have been reorganised on a more modern and efficient basis, they might attract a better class of youngmen to the service of the nation as officers in the army and the navy. This latter would have to start from scratch. The Chinese Air Force, such as it is, is already attracting the right kind of youngmen into its commissioned and non-commissioned ranks.

These are tremendous tasks and will, for their successful accomplishment, require the whole available energy of the nation and the co-operation of all classes

and sections. In many respects India will from its experience and resources, human, as well as material, be in a position and will have the fullest desire to assist China in these tasks. Equally will China be in a position to render assistance to India in solving many of the problems which India will have to tackle in the post-war period. It is to be hoped that with a system of progressively improved communications established between the two countries, each will be able to co-operate with the other to the end that such co-operation may result in the promotion of the true welfare of the peoples of these two great countries which together constitute nearly one-third of the whole human race.